

Headquarters Air Force Doctrine Cent

At the Heart of Warfare Lies Doctrine

Counterair



U.S. AIR FORCE



Counterair Construct



U.S. AIR FORCE

★ **Air and Space Superiority**

- ★ **Air superiority (Counterair Operations)**
- ★ **Space superiority (Counterspace Operations)**
- ★ **Information superiority (Information Operations)**

While counterair, counterspace , and counterinformation operations all contribute to the overall effect of air and space superiority, the methods and timeframes used are likely to be different. Counterair operations utilize any and all element of the joint/combined force to achieve dominance above the earth's surface yet within its atmospheric confines.

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DOCTRINE FOR COUNTERAIR OPERATIONS



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Control of the air and space environment is a necessity for providing the joint force with greater freedom of action while reducing its vulnerability to enemy detection and attack. Air superiority gives friendly forces *freedom from attack, freedom to maneuver, and freedom to attack.*

The USAF provides the JFC with forces capable of conducting counterair operations. However, counterair operations are best employed as a joint team effort, carried out by the integrating of a variety of assets, including air-to-air and air-to-surface aircraft and missiles, surface-to-air defenses, and the requisite C4ISR systems.

This AFDD gives operational level AF guidance to all Air Force officers for planning, integrating, coordinating, and executing counterair operations.

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Counterair Definition



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★ JP 1-02 (Counterair as a mission)

- ★ “A mission which integrates offensive and defensive operations to attain and maintain a desired degree of air superiority. Counterair missions are designed to destroy or negate enemy aircraft and missiles, both before and after launch.”

★ AFDD 2-1.1 (Counterair as a function)

- ★ “Counterair is the function used to gain and maintain the effect of air superiority.”
- ★ “Whether this action takes the form of an information attack, air attack, surface attack, or space-based attack does not matter. If the effect is air superiority, you are talking counterair operations.”

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Counterair Purpose



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★ **Air Superiority Provides:**

- ★ **Freedom from attack**
- ★ **Freedom to maneuver**
- ★ **Freedom to attack**

★ **To What Extent?**

- ★ **Assets available**
- ★ **Risk**
- ★ **Scope of operation**
- ★ **Enemy order of battle**
- ★ **JFC priorities**

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DOCUMENT OVERVIEW



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CHAPTER ONE - Counterair Operations

CHAPTER TWO - Command and Control

CHAPTER THREE - Offensive Counterair

CHAPTER FOUR - Defensive Counterair

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COUNTERAIR OPERATIONS



- ★ **Objectives--To facilitate friendly operations and protect friendly forces and vital assets**
 - ★ **Directed at enemy assets that directly challenge control of the air**
 - ★ **Level of air superiority may vary by time or location**
 - ★ **Commander must balance an acceptable level of risk versus the required weight of effort**
- ★ **Includes Offensive and Defensive Counterair**
- ★ **Enhanced by Information Operations**
- ★ **Requires accurate and timely intelligence**

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COMMAND AND CONTROL



- ★ **In most cases, the COMAFFOR will be designated as the JFASCC**
- ★ **JFASCC is normally the supported commander for counterair operations**
- ★ **The JFASCC will be most effective when also designated as the Area Air Defense Coordinator (AADC) and the Airspace Control Authority (ACA)**
 - ★ **Closely interrelated responsibilities for OCA, DCA and Airspace Control are best carried out by a single individual**

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COMMAND AND CONTROL



- ★ **ACA - The ACA is responsible for operating the airspace control system within the airspace control area and coordinating and integrating the use of the airspace control area.**
- ★ **AADC - The AADC is responsible for integrating the entire air defense effort and should be the component commander with the C4I capability to plan and execute integrated air defense operations.**

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COMMAND AND CONTROL



- ★ **JFASCC controls counterair function through the Theater Air Control System (TACS)**
- ★ **AOC is the main unit to direct, control and execute air operations**
 - ★ **CRC provides regional airspace management and C2 links from AOC to fielded assets**
 - ★ **AWACS and JSTARS provide airborne surveillance and real time battle management against airborne and surface targets**
 - ★ **ABCCC directs air support to ground operations in the forward area**

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COMMAND AND CONTROL



- ★ **C2 systems provide means to identify friend from foe, prevent fratricide, and integrate all offensive and defensive operations most effectively throughout the available airspace**
- ★ **Closely interrelated responsibilities for Offensive and Defensive Air Operations and Airspace Control are best carried out by a single individual as the JFASCC, the AADC and the ACA**

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OFFENSIVE COUNTERAIR



- ★ **Operations are intended to be proactive and to seize the initiative from the enemy**
 - ★ **Normally conducted deep in enemy territory**
- ★ **Specific types of operations include:**
 - ★ **Surface Attack to disrupt or destroy selected targets on the ground**
 - ★ **Fighter Sweep to clear enemy aircraft from the air**
 - ★ **Escort to protect friendly airborne assets**
 - ★ **SEAD to disrupt or destroy enemy air defenses**

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OFFENSIVE COUNTERAIR



- ★ **Objective - Gain the ability to utilize the air medium while denying the enemy the same**
- ★ **Sample target sets:**
 - ★ **Airfield and Operating Bases**
 - ★ **Aircraft**
 - ★ **Theater Missiles and Support Infrastructure**
 - ★ **C4ISR Systems**
 - ★ **Air Defense Systems**
- ★ **JFASCC must prioritize objective, determine targets, and integrate the entire counterair effort**

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DEFENSIVE COUNTERAIR



- ★ **Provide a secure area from which elements of the joint force can operate effectively**
 - ★ **Normally conducted over friendly territory**
 - ★ **Frequently reactive in nature, responding to enemy attack**
- ★ **Includes integrated Active and Passive DCA measures operating in conjunction with each other**

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DEFENSIVE COUNTERAIR



- ★ **Active Air Defense attacks enemy aircraft and missiles**
 - ★ **Employs fighter aircraft, AAA and SAMs**
 - ★ **Requires robust C4ISR system with decentralized execution authority**
 - ★ **Specific missions include:**
 - ★ **Area Defense**
 - ★ **Point Defense**
 - ★ **Self Defense**
 - ★ **High Value Airborne Asset Protection**

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DEFENSIVE COUNTERAIR



- ★ **Passive Air Defense measures are taken to minimize the effect of enemy air attacks**
- ★ **Measures include:**
 - ★ **Hardening Redundancy**
 - ★ **Reconstitution Detection and Warning**
 - ★ **Dispersal Mobility**
 - ★ **Low Observable Technology Stealth**
 - ★ **NBC Defense Equipment and facilities**
 - ★ **Camouflage, Concealment, and Deception**

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DEFENSIVE COUNTERAIR



- ★ **Objective - Deny the enemy from attacking friendly forces or reduce their effectiveness when an attack does occur**
 - ★ **Active air defense - Actions taken to destroy or reduce the effectiveness of hostile air and missile threats against friendly forces and assets**
 - ★ **Passive air defense - Provide maximum protection for friendly forces and assets and complicate the enemy's identification, surveillance, and targeting process**

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SUMMARY



The future battle on the ground will be preceded by battle in the air. This will determine which of the contestants has to suffer operational and tactical disadvantages and be forced throughout the battle into adopting compromise solutions.

General Erwin Rommel

The war in the Persian Gulf provided a textbook example of what air supremacy means both for the country that gained it, and for the country ceding it.

General A. Malyukov

Soviet Air Force Chief of

Staff

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